

TERROR



NO. 43
SEPTEMBER



10¢

TALES

FROM THE

CRYPT

®

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



ARE YOU A RED DUPE?

IN THE TOWN OF GAZDOSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MELVIN BLUZUNKEN - GADOVITCHSKY PUBLISHED A COMIC MAGAZINE...



... SO THEY CAME AND SMASHED HIS FOUR-COLOR PRESS...



... AND ALONG POOR, MELVIN THE NEXT MORNING!



- HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN STILL PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SLICKS, BOOKS AND THE BIBLE. WE DON'T HAVE TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR FIRST. NOT YET...
- FOR THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD LIKE TO CENSOR... WHO WOULD LIKE TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR THEM! THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR YOU!
- THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT COMIC BOOKS AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS NO COMIC BOOKS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS. SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING. AND SOME ARE JUST FLAIN MEAN.
- BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY:

THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

- WE'RE SERIOUS! NO KIDDIN'! HERE! READ THIS:

THE COMMUNIST "DAILY WORKER" OF JULY 15, 1953 SAID THAT COMICS PLAY THE CONSCIOUS ROLE OF:

"... BRUTALIZING AMERICAN YOUTH, THE BETTER TO PREPARE THEM FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING OUR GOVERNMENT'S AIMS OF WORLD DOMINATION, AND TO ACCEPT THE ATROCITIES NOW BEING PERPETRATED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN KOREA UNDER THE FLAG OF THE UNITED NATIONS."

THIS ARTICLE ALSO QUOTES BERSHON LEGMAN (WHO CLAIMS TO BE A GROSS WRITER FOR DR. FREDERICK WERTHAM, THE AUTHOR OF A RECENT BLAST AGAINST COMICS PUBLISHED IN "THE LADIES HOME JOURNAL"), THIS SAME 6. LEGMAN, IN ISSUE #3 OF "NEUROLOGIA," PUBLISHED IN AUTUMN 1948, SAID:

"THE CHILD'S NATURAL CHARACTER... MUST BE DISTORTED TO FIT CIVILIZATION... FANTASY VIOLENCE WILL PARALYZE HIS RESISTANCE, DIVERT HIS AGGRESSION TO UNREAL ENEMIES AND FRUSTRATIONS, AND IN THIS WAY PREVENT HIM FROM REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS AND TEACHERS. THIS WILL SIPHON OFF HIS RESISTANCE AGAINST SOCIETY, AND PREVENT REVOLUTION."

- SO THE NEXT TIME SOME JOKER GETS UP AT A P.T.A. MEETING, OR STARTS JABBERING ABOUT THE "NAUGHTY COMIC BOOKS" AT YOUR LOCAL CANDY STORE, GIVE HIM THE **GYCE-OVER**. WE'RE NOT SAYING HE IS A COMMUNIST! HE MAY BE INNOCENT OF THE WHOLE THING! HE MAY BE A **DUPE!** HE MAY NOT EVEN READ THE "DAILY WORKER"! IT'S JUST THAT HE'S **SWALLOWED THE RED BAIT... HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER!**

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HELLO! HI, LOW-LIFERS! YEP, IT'S YOUR LURID LIBRARIAN, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY TO OPEN ANOTHER SQUEAL-SESSION HERE IN THE CRYPT WITH ANOTHER OF MY FAVORITE TWISTED-TALES OF TORMENT AND TORTURE. SO, COME ON IN AND SIT DOWN ON THAT BLOOD-STAINED STONE MARKER THERE AND I'LL BEGIN THE YELP-YARN I CALL...

FOUR-WAY SPLIT



ROY DIXON AWOKED WITH A START, KNOWING SOMETHING WAS WRONG. HE OPENED HIS PUZZLED EYES, LOOKED AROUND BLANKLY, . . . AND SCREAMED. WHERE WAS HE? WHAT WAS THIS COLD GREY STONE ROOM THAT BOXED HIM IN LIKE A TRAPPED ANIMAL? WHAT WAS THAT STEADY HISS, LIKE A THOUSAND VENOMOUS REPTILES? WHY WAS HE BOUND HELPLESSLY TO THIS IRON CHAIR? HE STRUGGLED FURIOUSLY, BUT THE ROPES ONLY BRUISED HIS FLESH. HIS THROAT WAS TORN RAW BY HIS WILD PLEADING SCREAMS THAT ONLY DEAFENED HIS OWN EARS. . .

PLEASE! HELP ME, SOMEBODY! LET ME OUT OF HERE! YA AAAAAHHHHH...



BUT NOBODY CAME TO RELEASE ROY FROM HIS NIGHTMARE TRAP, AND HE SEEMED TO HEAR A GHOSTLY, HOLLOW-TONED VOICE ECHOING AND REVERBERATE THROUGH THE GRAB ROOM...

I SENTENCE YOU, ROY GORDON, TO EXECUTION IN THE GAS CHAMBER FOR FIRST DEGREE MURDER...

IT'S A GAS CHAMBER IF NOT! LET ME GO! THIS IS WRONG!



NOW THE WILDLY SCOURGING PRISONER COULD SEE... ONLY... THE HOODED FIGURE PEERING IN AT HIM IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE OBSERVATION WINDOW, REGULATING THE FLOW OF LETHAL GAS THAT HEARD FROM THE GRILLED VENT IN THE FLOOR. HIS EXECUTIONER!

NO! IT CAN'T BE! THIS IS WRONG! NOT THE WAY I PLANNED IT AT ALL! YOU CAN'T DO THIS! IT'S A MISTAKE! PLEASE! OH, LORD... STOP HIM!



BUT THERE WAS NO ANSWER FROM THE HOODED WATCHER. ROY GORDON'S BRAIN CLOSED NOW. HIS SENSES REELED CRAZILY AS THE DEADLY VAPOURS WERE ABSORBED FROM HIS BREASTS LUNGES INTO HIS RACING BLOODSTREAM... HIS CHIN SAGGED... HIS HEAD LOLLING, HE WAS DYING.

THIS... IS ALL WRONG! IT... CAN'T BE... TRUTH!



WAS IT A DREAM? A HORROR NIGHTMARE? IT MUST BE THAT! ROY CLUNG TO THAT REASSURING THOUGHT AS THE STONE BURNED UPON AND FUSED BEFORE HIS BLENDING EYES. DREAMABLY, HIS MEMORY REACHED BACK, BACK TO THE WAR, RED DAYS OF WORLD WAR II WHEN HE AND BUICK GORDON HAD BEEN AIR FORCE BUDDIES.

BOMBARDIER TO PILOTTARGET'S DEAD AHEAD!

PILOT? PILOT! FOR HENRY! LET'S GO GET 'EM!



OF COURSE, THAT SORT OF THING HAD BEEN DONE DURING OFF-DUTY HOURS. ON DUTY, IT WAS CAPTAIN BUICK GORDON, PILOT, AND SECOND LIEUTENANT ROY GORDON, BOMBARDIER... AND NO MORE...

SHARE THE LEAD... OUT LIEUTENANT! THERE'S A WAR ON! REMEMBER!

OH, BUICK! I... YES, SIR!



ONCE IN THE AIR, SLIDING HIS ROARING METAL MONSTER, PREGNANT WITH COMBAT, BUICK HAD ALWAYS BEEN ALL-OUT RIGHT THROUGH TO HIS STEEL-SPINE BONE.

PILOT TO BOMBARDIER! THIS IS A PRIME TARGET TONIGHT! UNDERSTAND? DON'T MISS... OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE MY SHIP AGAIN.

Y-YES, SIR!



YES, THAT'D BEEN BUICK... PULLING RANK, SHOWING THE CREW, SLIDING IN HIS SILVER BARRED AUTHORITY. BUT ROY'S BUBBLED IT IN GOOD, MAKING BUICK SCOURMANGO FUME HELPLESSLY WHEN HIS CHANCE CAME... ON THE BOMBING RUN... WHEN HE WAS IN COMMAND.

TARGET SIGHTED! TAKING OVER, CAPTAIN! STEADY, NOW STEADY... OUT THAT SIDE-SLIP, NEAR ME? THAT'S AN ORDER, CAPTAIN!

Y-YES, LIEUTENANT!



BUT THEN, BETWEEN MISHONS, THEY'D BEEN THROB AS THIEVES AGAIN... BUYING EACH OTHER DRINKS AND PLANNING THEIR FUTURE... AFTER THE WAR...

THINK OF IT, BOY... **DROP OWN AIRLINE... YOU AND ME... PARTNER!** ALL WE'D NEED IS **ONE SURPLUS FOUR ENGINE JOB** TO GET STARTED!

HAULING **GREAT SLOOT!** COUNT ME MY **SHARE.**



AND SO, ONE GLORIOUS POST-WAR MORNING, THEY'D STOOD PROUDLY BEFORE THEIR QUICKEST HANGAR... BUSINESS PARTNERS...

THE **BUCKROY AIRLINES** UNFOLDS ITS **SILVER WINGS TA-TA-TA-TA!**

CAN THE **GLORIOUS** BOY? WE'VE GOT A **MORTGAGE** TO PAY OFF ON THAT **OLD RECONDITIONED B-BB!** LET'S GET TO **WORK!**



FINALLY, AFTER WEEKS OF LEG-WORK, THEY'D LANDED THEIR FIRST CONTRACT, AND FLYING THEIR FIRST LOAD HAD BEEN JUST LIKE OLD TIMES... TOO MUCH LIKE OLD TIMES...

NO LOAFING, BOY! GET BACK AND **CHECK THE GARGO!**

STILL PULLIN' **HAANK, BUCK!** THE **WAR'S OVER, OUM! REMEMBER THAT!** WITH **PARTNERS!**



ROY LIFTED HIS HEAD BROODER, THE PAST FACED THE HISSING OF THE LETHAL GAS WAS GONE.

I'M **ALIVE!** THE **GAS CHAMBER** HAS **UNDOINED!** IT WAS A **DREAM!** IT'S **GONE NOW!** I'M **AWAKE!** I **KNEW** THEY NEVER BROUGHT ME TO **TRIAL...** NEVER **SENTENCED** ME TO THE **GAS CHAMBER.** I **KNEW!** IT WAS ALL... A... **DREAM.**



BUT WHAT WAS THIS? WHAT WAS THIS NEW TORTURE BOY WAS SUDDENLY ANGRY OFF WHY WAS IT SO HARD TO SPEAK? WHAT WAS AROUND BOY'S NECK... SOMETHING... SQUEEZING...

OH, **LORD!** I'M ON A **SCAFFOLD!** THIS IS A... **CHOKER... HOOBBE** AROUND MY **NECK!** I'M BEING **KUW!**

I **DEFENCE** YOU, **ROY** **BYON,** TO BE **HANGED BY THE NECK UNTIL DEAD!**



THE **HOOSE** STEADILY **TIGHTENED,** CLAMPING HIS **WINDPIPE** SHUT FROM THE **WRIGHT** OF HIS **BODY.** SOMETIMES THIS **SHASTLY** THING **HAPPENED...** THE **VICTIM'S** NECK **UNBROKEN** BY THE **DROPPING** TRAP... **LETTING** HIM **DIE** A **SLOW** **HORRIFYING** **DEATH** BY **STRANGULATION** **JORDING** HIM INTO A **SUPPLICATING** **ETERNITY...**



NO! NO! YOU CAN'T HANG ME! I **ESCAPED** THE **LAW!** THIS IS A **DREAM,** I'M **SURE!** ANOTHER **HORRIBLE** **DREAM...**

ROY'S MIND **SANK** INTO A **DEEP** **DARK** **POOL** AGAIN OUT OF WHICH **PUFFED** **VISIONS** OF THE **PAST** **CAME** **ONCE** **MORE...** **REVIEWING** HIS **ASSOCIATION** WITH **BUCK** **BORDON,** **EVER** **THOUGH** THEIR **AIRLINE'S** **EXPANDED** **THROUGH** THE **YEARS,** **UP** **INTO** **GOLDEN** **BRACKETS,** **BACK'D** **KEPT** **IT** **UP,** **HATEFULLY,** **PULLING** **HANK...**

CANCEL THIS **PETERSON** **CONTRACT,** **ROY!** IT'S **NO** **GOOD!** IT **WON'T** **PAY!**

IT IS **GOOD!** IT **WILL** **PAY!** **NOW** **LISTEN,** **BUCK!** **ONCE** **AND** **FOR** **ALL,** I'M **NOT** A **HUNG** **MAN** **ON** THE **PAYROLL!** I'M AN **EQUAL** **PARTNER!** **UNDERSTAND?**



ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D WARNED HIS BUSINESS ASSOCIATE...

I NEGOTIATED THAT CONTRACT MYSELF, BUCK, AND I'M BACK AND FROD OF YOUR BOLLING ME. TRY IT ONCE MORE! AND SO HELP ME, I'LL PULL OUT OF THIS PARTNERSHIP!

GO AHEAD, ROY! ANYTIME YOU WANT TO CALL IT OFFS IS GREAT WITH ME! IF YOU CAN'T PLAY IT MY WAY, JUST SAY THE WORD! SOMEBODY'S GOT TO BE BOSS HERE AND RUN THINGS RIGHT!



AND ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D FUNELED AND GAMBLED INWARDLY, FINALLY COMING TO THE STARK REALIZATION...

SO THAT'S HIS GAME! HE'S TRYING TO MAKE IT SO MISERABLE FOR ME, I'LL PULL OUT AND LEAVE HIM TO HOLD THE WHOLE SHOW!



WELL... THIS GAME CAN BE PLAYED BOTH WAYS? OF COURSE! WHY NOT? WHY NOT HIM? IF I CAN GET HIM TO PULL OUT... TURN THE TABLES... THE WHOLE DEAL WOULD BE MINE! BUT HOW? HOW COULD I GET RID OF HIM? I'VE GOT TO THINK OF A WAY...



AND SO, HIS ULTIMATE HATRED FOR HIS PARTNER HAD EATEN LIKE CAUSTIC INTO ROY'S SOUL AND HE'D ELIMINATED ALL WAYS TO HIS SUCCESSFUL AIRLINES OF BUZZ GORDON... ALL WAYS, THAT IS, EXCEPT ONE...

MURDER? I'VE GOT TO KILL HIM! IT'S THE ONLY WAY!



ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D STUDIED THE WALL MAP AND DECIDED...

THEY SAY THAT "MURDER WILL OUT"! A MURDER CAN NEVER STAY CONCEALED! SO... I WON'T CONCEAL IT! I'LL PLAY IT STRAIGHT OUT IN THE OPEN! AND HERE'S WHERE THE LAW WOULD SEND FOR THE FIRM PLUS MY MORTUARY TRAINING PAYS OFF!



ROY'D ALWAYS HANDED THE "DIRTY WORK" FOR THE AIRLINE... THE LAW CASES THAT HAD COME UP FROM TIME TO TIME... HE'S EVEN TAKEN LAW COURSES AT NIGHT TO HELP... NOW, HIS LAW WORK WOULD HELP HIM TO COMMIT MURDER, AND GET AWAY WITH IT!

THESE FOUR STATES... UTAH, ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO, AND COLORADO, ALL COME TOGETHER... HERE... AT ONE COMMON POINT AND THAT'S IT! A FOUR STATE WHORLE OVER ONE CERTAIN MURDER!



AND SO ROY'D PREPARED AND WAITED... AND HIS OPPORTUNITY COME ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE OFFICE HELP HAD GONE HOME AND BUCK WAS WORKING LATE, GETTING A NIGHT AIR FREIGHT SHIPMENT CHECKED OUT...

ROY'S THERE? OH, IT'S YOU, ROY? THOUGHT YOU WENT HOME WITH THE OTHERS. WELL, SCRAM... I'M BUSY!

STILL THE BOSS, EH, BUCK? STILL THE CAPTAIN ORDERING AROUND HIS CREW? WELL, MY DEAR BOSS CAPTAIN...



ROY REMEMBERED HOW HE'D RAISED THE MONEY WRENCH... BRINGING IT DOWN ACROSS BUCK'S HEAD CAREFULLY... BARY... NOT TOO HARD... NOT HARD ENOUGH TO KILL HIM... NOT YET.



... THAT WAS YOUR LAST ONCE? YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE TRIP...

OH, YES!

OUT INTO THE DARKNESS, ROY'S CARRIED BUCK'S UNCONSCIOUS FORM INTO THE REAR DOOR OF THE HANGAR... TO THE SURPLUS B-25 THEY STILL USED FOR SHORT FREIGHT HAULS... SHORT NIGHT HAULS... LIKE THE ONE TONKONE.



ALL LOADED UP... READY TO GO NOWHERE'S CHECK THE CARGO HOLD NOW! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SHIFT A FEW CRATES... AND I'M SET...

IT'D BEEN SO EASY... TYPING BUCK UP, BRAGGING HIM IN CASE HE'D COME TO, AND STUFFING HIM UP ONTO THE OLD BOMB PACKS...



... THEN STOWING THE OTHER ITEM THE ITEM ROY'D BOUGHT AND RECONDITIONED PAINFULLY... THE JUMP-PLUS BOMBOMME... INTO THE GLUTTERED NOSE OF THE OLD SUPERFET...



... AND WAITING AROUND TILL THE GROUND CREW'S TRUNDLED THE OLD LADY OUT ONTO THE FIELD AND WARMED UP HER ENGINES, IT'D BEEN SO EASY TO BUMP INTO BATSON, THE PILOT.



BORTA BRINGS BACK OLD MEMORIES, THAT BARY? YOU KNOW, BATSON? I'D LIKE TO COME ALONG FOR A RIDE TONIGHT! DEAL WITH ROY?

WHY, UH... SURE, FINE, MR. DECK! YOU'RE THE BOSS!

AND AS THEY BOARED WEST, IT'D BEEN SO EASY FOR ROY TO PRETEND A WAR HERO'S NOSTALGIA...



YOU KNOW, BATSON? IT'S JUST COME OVER ME! I'D LIKE TO MAKE LIKE A BOMBARDIER AGAIN... FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE. I'M GOING FORWARD INTO THE NOSE, FOLLOW MY ORDERS ON THE INTERCOM... JUST LIKE YOU'RE MY PILOT AND WE'RE HEADED OVER BERLIN! AND STOP BRINNING!

I'M... I'M NOT BRINNING, MR. DECK! I UNDERSTAND!

IT'D BEEN SO EASY TO UNCOVER THE BOMB-SIGHT AND PLUG IN THE LEADS HE'D WORKED ON FOR WEEKS... THE LEADS THAT CONTROLLED THE ALERONS... THE ELEVATORS... THE RUDDER... THE BOMB-DAYS... AND THE BOMB-PACKS... THE BOMB RUN!



ALL RIGHT, BATSON! LET'S HEAD HER AROUND TO A READING OF THREE DEGREES SOUTH BY WEST...

BUT THAT'S OFF OUR COURSE, MR. DECK!

NOT HER! BOMB OFF, BATSOM! JUST PLAY ALONG AND HONOR YOUR BOSS, HUH?

OHAY, MR. BIGN! IT'S FOUR O'CLAP!

THE FROOD OLD GAL HAD TURNED SOUTHWEST AND ROY'D SET GIM AND THWAT-LIFFED. MORE TENSE THAN HE'D EVER BEEN ON ANY MISSION OVER GERMANY. AND HE'D PLAYED IT LIKE A GAME...

BOMBARDIER TO PLOOF! TAKE HER DOWN TO 1000 FEET. HEADING 2 DEGREES, SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST.

YES, SIR!

BUT IT'D BEEN NO IDLE GAME FOR ROY. IT'D BEEN A GAME OF DEATH AND THE STAKES WERE HIGH. THIS HAD TO BE "ON TARGET" "DIRECT HIT"... ON THE MOOSE! BUT HE'D TIMED IT PERFECTLY! THE MOON HAD ILLUMINATED EVERYTHING BELOW.

TARGET SIGHTED! I'LL PUT HER OVER, BATSOM. BATSOM, LET GO OF THE CONTROLS!

BUT, SIR.

THE BOMB BAYS HAD OPENED. BUCK'D LOCKED DOWN AND TRIED TO SCREAM BUT THE CAB HAD HELD. FINE CROSS HAIRS HAD MOVED SLOWLY TOGETHER, AND THEN...

BOMB AWAY!

DOWN AND DOWN, THE HUMAN BOMB HAD HURTTLED.

AND THE MEMORY FAGED AS THE CONSTRUCTION ARROUND ROY'S THROAT EASED AND AIR RUSHED INTO HIS LUNGS IN GREAT SCORING GULPS...

I... I'M ALIVE AGAIN! I'M NOT HANGING ANYMORE! THE MOOSE IS GONE! I... I WAS DREAMING AGAIN.

... AND ONCE AGAIN HE HEARD THE SAME HOODD EXECUTIONER'S VOICE AS THE SWITCH WAS THROWN.

SUDDENLY, THERE WAS BARRING AGAIN FOR ROY. NOW, WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S THIS HOODD CROPPING OVER MY HEAD? WHY AM I BEING PUSHED DOWN INTO THIS CHAIR? WHY ARE THEY STRAPPING ME IN? IT'S WHAT... WHAT... OH, LORD!

I DENYFACE YOU, ROY BIXON, TO DEATH BY ELECTROGUTION!

NO! OH, GOD! NO! IT'S THE ELECTRIC CHAIR!

THE FIRST JOLT RIPPED INTO BOY ORION LIKE A MILLION WHITE-HOT NEEDLES... BOLLING HIS BLOOD HE COULD SMELL HIS OWN FLESH BURNING. THE SECOND JOLT SPIRALED HIM INTO A BLUE-WHITE FLASHING MESS THAT CHANGED INTO A PICTURE OF THE PAST... OF BUCK JORDON'S BODY SMASHING TO EARTH DIRECTLY UPON A LARGE FLAT STONE MARKER...

RIGHT ON TARGET...

YES, IT **HAD** BEEN 'RIGHT ON TARGET'. BOY'S FIN-POINT BOMBING HAD DROPPED BUCK JORDON ON THE STONE MARKER THAT DELINEATES THE **COMMON CORNERS** OF UTAH, COLORADO, ARIZONA, AND NEW MEXICO... STAINING IT RED WITH BLOOD AND RUPTURED FLESH...



IT HAD ALL GONE ACCORDING TO PLAN. BOY'D OPENLY AND BOLDLY PLEADED GUILTY TO THE GRAND JURY'S INDICTMENT. BUT THEN THE FUN HAD STARTED AS THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COURTS OF FOUR STATES WRANGLED LIKE ALLEY-CATS OVER ONE MOUSE...

UTAH CLAIMS JURISDICTION IN THIS MURDER CASE

ARIZONA CLAIMS THE RIGHT TO TRY THE PRISONER!

NEW MEXICO. COLORADO!

A LEGAL BRAWL HAD DEVELOPED. BUCK JORDON HAD MET HIS DEATH AT THE **FOUR MUTUAL CORNERS** OF THESE STATES. **EACH ONE** DEMANDED ITS RIGHT TO PROSECUTE, CLAIMING SOLE JURISDICTION. BOY'D BEEN ABLE TO HAVE HIMSELF RELEASED ON \$50,000 BAIL, VIA A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS...

THEY'LL DRAG THROUGH COURT AFTER COURT. AT ANY DECISION TO TRY ME... I'LL APPEAL! THIS WILL GO ON FOR YEARS! I CAN APPEAL RIGHT UP TO THE SUPREME COURT!



AND BOY'D BEEN **RIGHT**? HIS PLAN HAD WORKED EXACTLY AS HE'D **PREDICTED** IT WOULD... THERE'D TAPE HAD **PILED UP**, TANGLING INTO A THICKER AND MORE COMPLICATED KNOT.

FOUR STATES... BUCKERING... EACH STUBBORN... JEALOUS... PRONTO! THEY'LL NEVER BRING ME TO TRIAL... AT LEAST NOT IN MY LIFETIME!



THE MEMORY FAGES, THE PAINFUL JOLTS OF ELECTRICITY WERE GONE. BOY LOOKED AROUND. IT WAS DARK NOW... DARK OVER A DESERT WASTELAND.

I... I'M **JURAZZ** AGAIN? I **WASN'T** ELECTROCUTED! OH, GOD! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? WHY AM I BEING TORTURED LIKE... LIKE... **ME?** WHAT AM I DOING **HERE?**





ROY LOOKED DOWN... HE WAS STANDING ON A FLAT ROCK... A MARKER... A FAMILIAR MARKER.

THIS IS WHERE **BUCK'S** BODY LANDED! I MUST BE DREAMING! "ARRRR!"

NO, ROY! DREAM! THIS IS NO DREAM!



THE HOODED FIGURE STOOD BESIDE THE MARKER.

YOU AGAIN! THE EXECUTIONER! BUT THEN I MUST BE DREAMING! I'M A FREE MAN! THE COURTS DIDN'T CROSS ANYTHING! THEY WOULDN'T FOR YEARS SO YOU CAN'T BE MY OFFICIAL EXECUTIONER!

THEN LET US SAY I AM YOUR UNOFFICIAL EXECUTIONER!



THE HOODED FIGURE POINTED TO THE GREY WALLED STRUCTURE WITH THE LITTLE OBSERVATION WINDOW.

YOU ESCAPED LEGAL EXECUTION BY YOUR DAMNING FLAR, BUT YOU ESCAPED THE GAS CHAMBER OF THAT STATE. SO I LET YOU DIE A LITTLE IN IT...



THE HOODED FIGURE SWEEPED HIS ARM. YOU ESCAPED THE SCOFFOLD OF THAT STATE... SO I LET YOU TRY THAT ONE TOO...



... IS A CIRCLE... POINTING. YOU ESCAPED THE ELECTRIC CHAIR OF THAT STATE... AND SO YOU'VE FELT WHAT IT IS TO DIE THAT WAY!



... POINTING TO THE LONG SHADOWS ON THE DESERT SAND...

AND NOW FOR THE LAST AND FINAL EXECUTION. THIS IS THE ONE I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU JUST A "TASTE" OF THE FIERCE SWORD OF RECK! AIM.

NOT! NO! THIS IS ALL SOME BRIGHT-MARTIN DREAM!



BUT THE EXECUTIONER REMOVED HIS HOOD... AND ROY SAW THAT THIS WAS NO DREAM...

...FIRE!

BUCK! BUCK! BUCK! BUCK! BUCK!

BLAM

THE END



HEH, HEH! SO POOR OLD ROY GOT IT FROM BUCK... FOUR DAYS! WELL, YOU'VE MET IT FROM E.C. FOUR WAYS WHEN YOU READ ONE OF YOUR GHOULONATIC MASS: FOUR CHILLING SCREAM-STORIES. NEXT COMES K.E. WITH HIS... THEN I'LL BE BACK TO RE-REPEAT YOU AND G.W. WILL COMPLETE THE CREEPY QUARTET. SO READ ON AND RETEN, DEAN FIEDL, I'LL DO YOU LATER! OH, BY THE WAY HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE E.C. FAR-ARREST CLEBY YOU HAVEN'T OH! THEN YOU KNOW 'BITE!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH...HEH! AND A HORRIBLE 'NY' TO ALL YOU HORROR-HAPPY HIDIOTS! WELCOME NOW TO THE VAULT OF HORROR. THIS IS YOUR NARRATOR OF NAUSEATING NOVELLETTES, THE HULL-FEEDER, READY TO READ ANOTHER REVOLTING REPRODUCTION FROM MY LIBRARY OF LECHEROUS LITERATURE. THIS FERROU-FORGE, THIS CHANCE GNUMF OF CHILLING CHARNEL CHAFFER IS APTLY ENTITLED...

COLD WAR

THERE WAS A BITING FROST IN THE LATE NOVEMBER NIGHT AIR WHICH HOVERED ABOUT THE LAST REMAINING FALL FLOWERS, RESTORING IDY KISSES OF DEATH UPON THEIR SHIVELING PETALS. THE LEAVES HAD LONG SINCE LEFT THE TREES, AND IN THEIR SHARLED TRUNKS TO THE COBBLE WINTER WINDS, SNOOVING BRANCHES THAT REACHED SKYWARD LIKE TWISTED AND WISHPAPER GOUT-WRACKED FINGERS. THERE, IN THAT GARDEN OF BLOOM, SAT THE WIFE AND THE LOVER, AND ON THE GREY COLD FLAGSTONE TERRACE STOOD THE HUSBAND, WATCHING... AND WAITING.



YOUR ARMS ARE LIKE ICE, MARIA. LET ME SET YOU WARM, MY DARLING...

PLEASE, NORMAN. DO THAT? I AM... COLD!



THE MOMENT NORMAN KING HAD MET MARIA HOLTAY THE PARTY GOING ON WITHIN THE HOUSE BEYOND, HE'D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HER. HE'D WAITED TILL SHE WAS ALONE... THEN COAXED HER INTO THE GARDEN, BRAZENLY FLAUNTING HIS ATTENTIONS UPON HER IN FRONT OF HER STONE-FACED HUSBAND. NOW, AS NORMAN PASSED PAUL HOLT, HE NOTICED HIS CYNICAL SMILE...

YOU'RE WAITING YOUR FAME, MY FRIEND. MARIA WILL AMUSE HERSELF WITH YOU... AND SAVOR HER LOVE FOR ME!

YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD OF YOURSELF, HOLT? WELL, WE'LL... SEE...



NORMAN HAD NOTICED THE COLO AND IMPRESSIVE IMPROVISENCE THAT HAD SEEMED TO BLANKET MARIA AND PAUL, AND HE'D ASSUMED THAT THE PASSION-FIRES HAD COOLED FOR THEM. SO HE'D SET HIS SIGHTS UPON THE POOR UNHAPPY WIFE, DETERMINED TO STIR UP THE FLAMES WITHIN HER ONCE AGAIN... FOR HIM, HE GOT MORE THAN MARIA'S WRAP FROM THE CLOACEROOM...



HE FINISHED THE BRUS-WORDED BLUE-BLACK IN AUTOMATIC HE'D TAKEN FROM HIS OVERCOAT, AND IT GAVE HIM CONFIDENCE...



WHEN NORMAN RETURNED TO THE GARDEN, PAUL WAS GONE...

NOW'S OUR CHANCE, MARIA. LET'S GO SOMEPLACE... ANYPLACE. JUST SO LONG AS IT'S AWAY FROM HERE! I WANT TO BE ALONE WITH YOU.

OH... I COULDN'T, NORMAN. PAUL WOULD 'WONNY' BESIDES, WE ARE ALONE OUT HERE, AREN'T WE?



NORMAN TOOK MARIA IN HIS ARMS... TRIED TO KISS HER...

DON'T SCARE ME, MARIA. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. I'M MADLY, HELPLESSLY IN LOVE WITH YOU!

PLEASE, NORMAN... DON'T PLEASE... YOU KNOW I'M MARRIED...



I HAVE EYES, MARIA! I CAN SEE YOUR HUSBAND AND YOU ARE LIKE TWO STONES! THE LOVE THAT WAS ONCE BETWEEN YOU IS DEAD! WHAT IF YOU I DO WEREN'T MARRIED... IF YOU HAD NO HUSBAND COULDN'T YOU CARE FOR ME?

WHAT'S THE USE IN SUFFERING, NORMAN? YOU HAVE A HUSBAND.



SUDDENLY MARIA TURNED AND RAN TOWARDS THE HOUSE...

... AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT!

MARIA! COME BACK!



MARIA DISAPPEARED THROUGH THE FRENCH DOORS AS PAUL HOLT'S JEERING LAUGHTER RANG OUT FROM THE FAR END OF THE GARDEN...

YES, MR. GALT! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT...

WHY YOU DIRT, SNEAKING... YOU WERE HIDING THERE IN THE SHADOWS ALL THIS TIME... LISTENING!



NORMAN'S HAND WENT TO THE LOADED AUTOMATIC IN HIS POCKET AS THE SMILING HUSBAND APPROACHED, AND HIS FACE FLUSHED RED WITH RAGE AND ANGER AT THE AMUSED TWINKLE IN PAUL'S EYES...

DO YOU COULDN'T GRAB HER ARM, KING? WHAT A PITY!

SHE SAID THERE WAS NO USE SUP-POSING, HOLT! SHE SAID THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO ABOUT YOU! WELL, THERE IS!



NORMAN WHIPPED OUT THE GUN, PRESSING THE COLD BLACK SNOW-POISED MUZZLE AGAINST PAUL HOLT'S CHEST. THE SMILING SMILE VANISHED FROM PAUL'S FACE...

THERE'S THIS I CAN KILL YOU!

DON'T BE A FOOL, KING! BEFORE YOU PULL THAT TRIGGER, LET ME TELL YOU WHY IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD!



YOU'RE TRYING TO SCARE ME TILL SOMEONE SEES US, HOLT. WELL, IT WON'T WORK!

NOBODY WILL COME OUT IN THIS COLD, KING! I MERELY WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT MARIA... AND ME... AND OUR ROMANCE. NOW IT BEGAN... EVERYTHING! BUT...



PAUL HOLT'S EYES NARROWED...

BUT, IF YOU'RE DETERMINED TO SHOOT, SO AHEAD!

ALL RIGHT! STAY TALKING, HOLT! BUT MAKE IT QUICK!



CURIOSITY HAD GOTTEN THE BETTER OF NORMAN. HE RELAXED A BIT AS PAUL BEGAN HIS STORY, BUT HE KEPT THE GUN MUZZLE LEVELLED AGAINST PAUL'S CHEST...

IT'S A STRANGE AND FRIGHTENING STORY, NORMAN! IT BEGAN WHEN I FIRST SAW MARIA. IT WAS A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO. SHE WAS SURROUNDED BY SKELETONS AND VAMPIRES AND WEREWOLVES.

SKELETONS? VAMPIRES? WHAT IN HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?



"YOU SEE, I'D SOME TO VISIT SOME RICH FRIENDS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI. THEY'D TAKEN ME TO A HALLOWE'EN MASQUERADE PARTY. MARIA WAS MADE UP AS A LITTLE SERIOUS RED DEVIL. I CAME AS A SCARDON. I WAS ATTRACTED TO HER THE MINUTE I SAW HER..."

NO FAIR LIFTING MY MASK TILL AFTER MIDNIGHT!

BUT I'VE GOT TO SEE IF THE FACE MATCHES THE FIGURE...



"AT MIDNIGHT MARIA UNMASKED AND I UNMASKED AND WE LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND KNEW. WE KNEW WHAT ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA, AND ROMEO AND JULIET, AND ALL THE OTHER LOVERS DOWN THROUGH THE AGES KNEW..."

MARIA!

PAUL!



"I TOOK HER BY THE HAND AND PULLED HER AFTER ME THROUGH THE SWIRLING CROWD OF MERRY NON-SENSES. SHE LAUGHED AND IT WAS LIKE THE TINKLING OF SILVER BELLS..."

PAUL...WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? STOP...

I'M GETTING YOU OUT OF HERE BEFORE ONE OF THESE SHODDLS BEATS ME TO IT!

"OUTSIDE, MARIA STOPPED, SHYERING. I LOOKED AT HER AND SHE WASN'T LAUGHING ANY MORE. FEAR LURKED IN HER EYES."

DON'T WELP ABOUT SHODDLS, PAUL! I...I DON'T LIKE THEM. I...I'M AFRAID!

HURT I...I... I'M SORRY, HONEY! I DIDN'T MEAN... I WOULDN'T...WELL,I'LL NEVER MENTION THEM AGAIN!



"I TOOK HER IN MY ARMS AND TRIED TO KISS HER RIGHT THEN AND THERE AS YOU JUST DID, NORMAN, BUT AS WITH YOU, SHE'D HAVE NONE OF IT..."

I'M PAUL HOELT AND YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL AND NOW THAT WE KNOW EACH OTHER

IF YOU INSIST ON TRYING TO KISS

SO I DIDN'T TRY. I COULDN'T, ALTHOUGH IT WASN'T EASY. THE NEXT EVENING, I TOOK HER TO DINNER. I TRIED TO HOLD HER HAND ACROSS THE TABLE, BUT SHE PULLED IT AWAY BEFORE I COULD TOUCH IT..."

DON'T SAY NO, MARIA. THAT'S WHAT OUR LIPS WERE MADE FOR...

NOTHING, PAUL! NOT YET! WE... WE DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER...



ME, PAUL. I'LL GO BACK INSIDE AND YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME AGAIN.

NOT EVEN THAT, MARIA?

IT WOULD BE WITH HOLDING MY HAND... AND THEN A KISS...ANOTHER...



IF YOU'RE PLAYING HARD-TO-GET, IT'S WORTHING, MARIA. YOU'RE DRIVING ME MAD!

IF YOU'RE IMPATIENT, PAUL...THERE ARE OTHER GIRLS... MUCH EASIER-TO-KISS GIRLS. PERHAPS YOU'D BETTER FORGET ABOUT ME!

I'M NOT GOING TO FORGET ABOUT YOU, MARIA! I COULDN'T! I WANT YOU I WANT YOU TO MARRY ME! THERE! I'VE SAID IT! MARRY ME, MARIA!

OH, PAUL! YES! YES, I'LL MARRY YOU... IF... IF MY MOTHER AND FATHER GIVE US PERMISSION! YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK THEM...



"MARIA AND HER PARENTS LIVED IN A LARGE OLD HOUSE OUTSIDE PORT-SA-PRINCE, WHEN I WENT TO SEE THEM THAT NIGHT, THEY SAT STIFFLY ACROSS A DRAWING ROOM THAT MUST HAVE BEEN FURNISHED IN 1880. THEIR ATTIRE FITTED THE SURROUNDINGS."

"I'VE COME TO ASK FOR YOUR PERMISSION TO MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER, MR. AND MRS. HARMON!"

"INDEED? AND PRECISELY WHAT ARE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS, MR. HOLT?"

"MY QUALIFICATIONS? I HAD TO CONTROL MYSELF TO KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE. YOU'D THINK I WAS APPLYING FOR A POSITION INSTEAD OF ASKING TO MARRY THEIR DAUGHTER."

"WHY I HAVE CURT A BIT OF MONEY, SIR - A GOOD EDUCATION, MY OWN BUSINESS..."

"FINE, MR. HOLT, BUT MORE IMPORTANT, WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO GIVE FOR MY DAUGHTER?"



"EVER HIS IDEAS OF GALLANTRY WERE VICTORIAN, I SURPASSED MY AMUSEMENT AND GAVE THE ANSWER HE WAS LOOKING FOR."

"I'D GIVE MY LIFE FOR MARIA WITH-OUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION, SIR!"

"AND THEN YOU HAVE OUR PERMISSION, YOUNG MARY!"

"OH, PALL, PALL, I'M SO HAPPY!"

"TO MY SURPRISE, MR. HARMON SAID WE COULD BE MARRIED THE VERY NEXT DAY, SO MARIA AND I WERE WED IN THAT COLO BLEAS CHURCH BY A LOCAL OFFICIAL."

"I NOW PRODUCE YOU MAN AND WIFE!"

"NOW YOU MAY KISS YOUR BRIDE, SON!"

"MR. HARMON SMILED, BUT MARIA PERMITTED ME TO DO NO MORE THAN BRUSH HER COLO LIPS WITH MINE. I BLAMED IT ON SHYNESS BEFORE HER PARENTS. I HOPED TO CRUSH HER IN MY ARM."



"WHEN THE OFFICIAL THAT HAD MARRIED US HAD GONE, MARIA TURNED TO HER FATHER. MR. HARMON TOOK A SMALL SILVER CASE FROM HIS WAISTCOAT POCKET AND REMOVED A SINGLE WHITE TABLET."

"GIVE IT TO ME, FATHER!"

"HERE, YOUNG MARY! WANT SWALLOW THIS?"

"WHAT IS IT? IT SMELLS FUNNY! MEDICINAL?"

"MARIA LOOKED AT ME REASSURINGLY, AND WHISPERED..."

"SWALLOW IT, PALL, DARLING! IT'S ALL RIGHT! IT'S STYRCHONINE!"

"STYRCHONINE? YOU SAID MR. THAT'S POISON! WHAT'S THE IDEA?"

"YOU'VE GIVE FOR MY DAUGHTER, PALL!"



"I DROPPED THE DEADLY LETHAL TABLET AND RACED OFF. MARIA KNELT AND PRESSED IT UP AND TRIED TO GIVE IT BACK TO ME. SHE PRESSED HER HAND IN MINE. HER FLESH WAS COLD... GOLD AS DEATH..."

"YOU SAID YOU'D DIE FOR ME, PAUL DEAR... (CHORE!) NOW YOU'VE GOT TO! OUR MARRIAGE CAN NEVER BE CONSUMMATED UNLESS YOU'VE LIVED. I AM... LIKE MOTHER AND FATHER UNLESS YOU'RE DEAD!"



"A CLAMMY CHILL CREEPT ACROSS ME LIKE AN INVISIBLE HAND OF HOARFROST. NUMBLY, I MOVED BACKWARDS. THERE WAS A LOOK OF DEADLY GRIM DETERMINATION ON THE FACES OF THE HARRONS AS THEY CAME SLOWLY AFTER ME."

"THAT'S WHY I NEVER LET YOU TOUCH ME OR KISS ME, PAUL! YOU'D HAVE FELT MY DEAD FLESH! TAKE THE PILL SO YOU CAN BECOME ONE OF US! I LOVE YOU! I WANT YOU!"

"NO! NO! NO! LORD, NO!"



"I SCREAMED AND BROKE FOR THE DOOR..."

"ZOMBIES! I'VE MARRIED INTO A FAMILY OF ZOMBIES!"



"THE DOOR WAS LOCKED... THE KEY GONE. I WHIRLED, CONFUSED. MY ONLY AVENUE OF ESCAPE WAS UP THE STAIRS..."

"PAUL! I LOVE YOU! I'VE GOT TO HAVE YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO DIE FOR ME TO HAVE YOU!"

"NO! NO!"



"THE DOORS ON THE SECOND FLOOR WERE ALL LOCKED TOO. FOR A MOMENT, THEY TRAPPED ME THERE, THEIR COLD LIFELESS HANDS HOLDING ME IN A STEEL GRIP. BUT WITH A STRENGTH BORN OF SICKEN TERROR, I WRENCHED FREE."

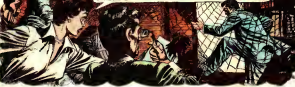
"PLEASE, PAUL! PLEASE!"

"OH, LORD..."



"THERE WAS NO TIME TO THINK... ONLY TO RUN. I SAW THE NARROW STAIRWAY LEADING UPWARD AND WITH A WILD FRANTIC SCRAMBLE, I STUMBLED UP INTO A MUSTY DUST-LADEN FOUL-SMELLING ATTIC. I REACHED THE ONE WINDOW IN THE JUNK-DRAWN ROOM, THREW IT OPEN, AND STARED DOWN THREE STORIES TO A BRICK PATIO. I BALANCED BACK AS I CLIMBED TO THE SILL AND SAW MY ZOMBIE WIFE AND IN-LAWS THROUGH A HAZE OF COBWEBS, COMING FOR ME—COMING—AND I HEARD MARIA'S PLEADING VOICE..."

"DON'T JUMP, PAUL! DON'T! YOU'LL CRUSH YOUR BODY... BREAK BONES... TEAR FLESH! I WOULDN'T WANT YOU DEAD THAT WAY..."



NORMAN KING LISTENED IN AMAZE-
MENT TO THIS TALE OF TERROR THAT
POURED FROM THE LIPS OF THE HUS-
BAND OF THE WOMAN HE WANTED SO
DESPERATELY. HE LOOKED DOWN AT
THE GUN IN HIS HAND, THE GUN LEV-
ELED AT PAUL HOLT'S CHEST...

I GUESS... I GUESS I
LET THEM CATCH ME! (WHAT
HAPPENED?)
MARIA TALKED SENSE!
IT WAS NO USE JUMP-
ING! ONE WAY OR THE
OTHER...



PAUL HOLT SPINNED WHIRLY...

WHAT HAPPENED?
WHY THEY KILLED
ME, OF COURSE!

THEY
KILLED...



SUDDENLY NORMAN HEARD PAUL'S
MOCKING LAUGHTER, SAW THE GLINT
OF AMUSEMENT IN HIS EYES. AND NOR-
MAN'S FACE FLUSHED SCARLET. HE
SEETHED WITH RAGE, HIS FINGER
TIGHTENED ON THE TRIGGER...

DO YOU THINK I'M A
FOOL, HOLT? DO YOU
THINK I BELIEVE
THAT BOTT?

BELIEVE
WHAT YOU
LIKE,
NORMAN!



NORMAN SCREAMED IN FURY, HE SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER
AGAIN AND AGAIN AS HE SHRIEKED...

I SAID I'D KILL YOU!
AND I MEANT IT! TAKE
THAT... AND THAT
AND THAT AND... SHOOE...



THE AUTOMATIC BARRED INTO THE NIGHT, FOUR UGLY
BLACK HOLES APPEARED IN PAUL'S CHEST. THEY GAYED
DRILY... BURST BY THE POWDER AT SUCH CLOSE RANGE.
BUT THERE WAS NO BLOOD! NORMAN STAGGERED BACK,
HIS FACE FROZEN IN AN EXPRESSION OF STARK HORROR...

YOU'RE DEAD! I SHOT YOU...
FOUR TIMES... THROUGH
THE HEART! YOU'VE GOT
TO BE DEAD!

I TOLD YOU THEY
KILLED ME, NORMAN.
I AM DEAD... LIKE MY
WIFE MARIA...



PAUL HOLT'S COLD LIFELESS HANDS CAUGHT NORMAN KING'S THROBBING
THROAT IN AN ICY DEATH-GRIP. HIS POWERFUL, DEAD FINGERS CLAMPED
TIGHTLY, CUTTING OFF NORMAN'S AIR SUPPLY... BUTTING OFF HIS LIFE!

THEY MADE ME A ZOMBIE, NORMAN! AND NOW, IF
YOU SMART MY WIFE SO BADLY... I'LL HAVE TO MAKE
YOU ONE, AT LEAST... THEN YOU MIGHT HAVE A
SHOT OF A CHANCE...



REEL, REEL! AND THAT'S MY TELL KARR
FOR THIS ISSUE OF C.K.'S PUTTING PER-
SONAL, OF COURSE. THE GUNS WERE ON
NORMAN... FALLING FOR A COLD BAST
LIKE MARIA. BUT EVERYTHING'S ALL
RIGHT NOW. NORMAN'S BEEN ACCEPTED
INTO ZOMBIE SOCIETY AND MARIA'S
PUNISHED HIM OFF ON A Distant CONFIN-
OF HERO. THIS GAL'S BEEN DEAD SO LONG,
SHE SAID TO KEEP HER DISTANCE. ANYONE
NORMAN'S HAPPY AS AN
UNDEPARTER AT A
PLANE CRASH WITH
HER. SEEMS HE GOES
FOR THE STRONG
TYPE... SMELLING THAT
IS... AND, BELONGING ABOUT
SPRING SMELLING,
I'LL TURN YOU BACK
TO C.K.'S EYE, NOW!





INSIDE STORY

They couldn't be far behind, Fitch realized. Of all the dumb luck . . . for years he'd snatched passes, and he'd never fumbled so badly as this time! His chest pounding as he rounded the corner, Fitch knew that his two pursuers would be closing in on him in another minute!

He skidded to a stop suddenly. In the empty lot to his right some kids were fooling around an old ice box, which sagged ludicrously atop a mound of rubbish. One punk sat inside the enamel box, while the others yammered, pretending they were about to shut the door. It took Fitch only a moment to see beauty in this sordid scene; the ice box was a better hideout than any other he'd find!

Fitch slammed one kid when he protested against an adult joining their fun . . . the others calmed down fast. Hunching over, Fitch pulled a five-spot from his pocket and the eyes around him grew big with anticipation. Fitch swiftly tore the bill into two pieces. He handed one half of the bill to the skinny kid nearest him. "I'm gonna duck into the ice box, see?" he whispered. "Slam that door shut after I'm in . . . then just keep on playing. You get the other half when you open the door for me!"

While the kids chattered excitedly, Fitch stepped into the box and maneuvered cork-screw fashion till he was able to squat down inside. "Okay!" he called. "When I rap on the side of the box, you open 'er up and get the other half of your reward! Now slam 'er closed!"

A tight fit, Fitch thought, a smile on his face. It was dark, and already the perspiration was beginning to swim down the small of his

back. But sitting it out in the ice box was a lot cooler than sweating out a prison sentence!

The air was stale and it was hard to breathe . . . but those cops'd pass by in another moment, and he'd hop out and make a getaway!

While he squatted inside the sealed box, two figures in blue raced around the corner. One of them pointed at the boys in the empty lot. At the same moment, the kids spotted the police. With a yelp of fear, the boys scattered, their legs thrashing frantically as they ran away. "T-They catch us here again," one boy granted, "and they'll run us in! Last time they warned us to stay outa this lot, or we'd all go to jail!"

In another minute the boys were gone, and the police ran on. The lot was silent. Except for the deep-throated groaning inside the abandoned ice box.

After the footsteps died away outside, Fitch pounded on the enamel side of the box . . . pounded till blood from his slashed knuckles ran down the slick surface. With all his strength he hurled himself against the door, but it held firm.

It was growing hot in the box . . . increasingly hard to breathe. Fitch's fingers ripped his collar open, but it didn't help. There was a curious buzzing in his ears, and he found it painful to keep his eyes open. His heart was beating strangely in his chest, and the white-hot lump in his throat seemed to be growing . . . seemed to be filling his whole muzzed body, as if it would soon burst. Just one breath of air, that's all he needed! Let the cops come and take him . . . let them throw him into solitary! Just let him gulp some air, and relieve the agony that was melting his insides! Air . . .



**YOU, TOO, CAN MEET NEW FRIENDS! JOIN THE
E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB!**

SEND FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT TODAY. RECEIVE A FULL-COLOR 7 1/4 X 10 1/2 ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SHAZZY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF PIN.

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 25¢ IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WISH TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH 25¢ FOR EACH NAME, AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER, EACH MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY... BY RETURN MAIL!

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 106
228 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 12, N.Y.

Here's my two bits! I want the things
and stuff like the kids wearing! I want
to meet new friends like the kid's meeting!
I'm a fan-addict! I'm mad!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE NO. _____

STATE _____

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Flash, huh? In everybody's "high fidelity" every there days? So who am I to stand in the way of progress? So snap on your ten watt all-voice amplifier, flip on your no-rumble, non-tracking error, four-speed, semi-instant record player with the diamond style variable reluctance magnetic plug-in pickup head, dust off your auto-reverse cabinet with the infinite buffer containing the twin 12 inch woofers, 6 over-ear external, and 8 matched-in-series tweeters . . . and lead a shattered ear to the crystal clear needle scratch of these latest additions to the E.C. HORROR HIT PARADE (now awaiting you at a flat response from 10 to 24,000 cycles, plus or minus 903 db. or maximum horse-power, maximum beam level at 3000 revolutions per minute), as just as by Frank Field of Post-Washington, N. Y.; Carl Nelson and Dolores Zaslavski of Detroit, Mich.; Rod Maxson and Jerry Sabiniski of Tulsa, N. J.; 2 Allegany High School Ghasts of Cumberland, Md., and Paul Black and Douglas Tachman of Elmwood, L. I.

MAGGOTS GO WHERE MY FILED
GUTS GO
EAT ME IN ST. LOUIS, LOOPY
STRANGLINGS ARE HAPPENING
SOME HAIR OVER MY SLAIN BEAU
YOU MADE ME SHOVE YOU
I'LL BREAK YOUR BONES AGAIN,
KATHLEEN
COMIN THROUGH THE EYE
DROWNED IN THE VALLEY
YOU WERE BENT FOR ME
SNOOK CITY SHREW
HAGS TO WITCHES
WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG
MAGGOTS

Kathleen O'Brien and Tom Olive of no address; Steve Fisher of Detroit, Mich.; William Gubi of Philadelphia, Pa.; and Dem Porcinos of N. Y. C. suggest the following PULL-YOUR-POG-RAME.

HATCHET SQUAD
BOAST OF THE TOWN
FOUR SCAR PLAYHOUSE
YOU BET YOUR WIFE
PERRY'S IN A COMA
MR. GIZZARD
T.V. SCREAM CLUB
SMILIN' ED'S FANG
THE PHONE STRANGER
I EAT THREE WIVES

Somebody sent in the following LURED LYRICE:

THE HEARSE WITH THE FRINGE ON TOP
FROM OKLAHOMACIDE

Rat and bat and owl better dispense
When I take you out in this hearse
When I take you out in the black hearse
With the fringe on top
Watch that fringe and see how it dances

As I drive the hearse through the gutter
Crazy folks will break through their stunts

And their jaws will drop.

The driver's dead

The upholstery's a skin

The dash-board'll drive you insane

With a solid glass bottom

You can look right in

In case you run over a pedestrian

Two bright fog-lights out on the fender

Spare tank of blood if you go on a bender

An unemployed musician who'll serenade

If you care to stop

In that steel little hearse

With the fringe on the top

All Folks of Portland, Ore. give the PERVERTED PARGDY to the tune of "Fretted"

Fretted you or drains' when you're blue,

It isn't very hard to do

And you'll find blood without an end

Whenever you proceed

Remember, anyone can drain

And nobody's dry if it may seem

The clean you haven't got could be a lot

If you proceed

You'll find a body you can drain,

One you can call all your own

Just close your eyes, blood is there

You'll never be alone

And if you sing this melody,

You'll be perceiving just like me

The blood is mine, it can be yours, my friend,

So why don't you proceed.

Gary Kimball of Deepen, N. C. sends me along with the FUTURE POETRY:

I used to be happy with a narrow lag.

Any old lag, and a drunken rag

But now, no more,

For that was before

I read an E.C. mag!

Now I'm sad and I post

Till an issue comes out

They make me happy, men.

I EAT AGAIN!

COMMERCIALS: This offer expires with this offer! Formerly last public announcement! **THREE DIMENSIONAL E.C. CLASSIC and THREE DIMENSIONAL TALES FROM THE CRYPT OF TERROR** . . . 12c each . . . 3 for 30c! Subscriptions to **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** . . . one back eight issues! Address for more terms of sale, or 3-D mag, or sub orders to:

The Crypt Keeper
Box 706, Dept. #2
225 LaGrange St.
N. Y. 12, N. Y.

HERE'S A TALE OF BLOODY T.V. PROGRAMING! I CALL THIS DUD...

CLOTS MY LINE



THE BLINDING BLEM LIGHTS BLAZED WHITE-HOT. THE RED SIGNAL ATOP THE KIMSCOPE CAMERA FLICKED ON. GEAR AND CHAINS WITHIN THE CAMERA BEGAN TO WHIRR SOFTLY. ALL THE PREVIOUS BUSTLING AND HAD CONFUSION HAD SUDDENLY COME TO A HUSHED END. THE "CAMNET" T.V. PROGRAM BEGAN, USHERED ONTO TAPE TO BE USED AT SOME FUTURE DATE BY THE UNCTUOUS, SLAVE VOICE OF ITS MASTER-OF-CEREMONIES, AMOR CHATFIELD...



GOOD EVENING, FRIENDS. WELCOME TO OUR NETWORK'S *SECRET'S* GAME... *"GUESS THE GUEST"*. A UNIQUE GUESS GAME IN WHICH OUR PANEL WILL ATTEMPT TO GUESS THE OCCUPATION OF OUR INVITED GUEST...

MR. FIERCE GRAYSON SAT BESIDE THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES, SMILING NERVOUSLY. FROM TIME TO TIME HE GLANCED AT THE PANEL SITTING STRAYN ACROSS THE SMALL STUDIO STAGE...

IF OUR PANEL *FAILS* TO NAME THE GUEST'S SECRET OCCUPATION WITHIN THE TIME LIMIT, HE RECEIVES A *POUNCEABLE PRIZE*...



MR. CHATFIELD NODDED TOWARD THE SLIM THREESOME OPPOSITE...

OUR PANEL IS *NEW* EACH WEEK. *GUESS THE GUEST* IS NOT A *CELEBRITY* PROGRAM. WE BELIEVE IT IS MORE FUN TO HAVE THREE... WELL... *AVERAGE* PEOPLE LIKE *POOR-PEEPS* MATCH WITS WITH OUR GUEST TONIGHT, ON OUR PANEL, WE HAVE MR. *RALPH PETERS*, NIGHT WATCHMAN... MISS *GELIN PRODRICK*, MOVIE CASHIER... AND MR. *FRIDZ DUNFEL*, MAINTENANCE MAN...



NOW, PANEL, MEET OUR GUEST... MR. PIERCE DRAYNOR. YOUR JOB WILL BE TO DISCOVER MR. DRAYNOR'S OCCUPATION... WHAT HE DOES? IN OTHER WORDS... GUESS THE GUEST? FIRST, WE'LL BEGIN WITH THE WILD GUESSES! MISS PROMICE!



MR. PIERCE DRAYNOR SAT IN THE GUEST SEAT WITH AN AMUSED SMILE, GLARING INSIDE. THEY'D NEVER GUESS HIS OCCUPATION. IT WAS SOMETHING THEY WOULDN'T EXPECT. JUST TO LOOK AT HIM...



MR. DRAYNOR IS A **SHOE SALESMAN!**

SORRY... NO? ER... MR. PETER?

HIS NEAT OUTER APPEARANCE... HIS QUIET VOICE... HIS RATHER BEER AIR... THERE WAS NOTHING OBVIOUS ABOUT MR. DRAYNOR THAT WOULD GIVE HIS OCCUPATION AWAY. MR. DRAYNOR WAS BORN TO ENJOY THIS.



MR. DRAYNOR CROWS **FLOWERS!**

THAT'S NOT IT? ER... MR. SUNKEL?

MR. DRAYNOR IS A **PLUMBER!**

THEY WERE ALL WRONG... SO VERY WRONG. MR. DRAYNOR LEDGED SLYLY AT THE HUMMING KINESCOPE CAMERA, WORKING THE VAST AUDIENCE THAT WOULD VIEW THIS AT SOME FUTURE TIME... AND HE REMEMBERED HOW HE'D MET MR. CHATFIELD THAT NIGHT LAST WEEK... IN THAT CRUMMY LITTLE EAST-SIDE CUBBY HOLE...



YOU ARE? WHY, I'M AN M.C. ON A NEW TV PROGRAM! ER... HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO APPEAR MR. DRAYNOR? IT'S CALLED **GUESS THE GUEST**. I'M SURE THAT YOUR OCCUPATION WOULD FLOOD OUR EXPERTS...

I'VE NEVER BEEN ON TV. WHAT'S IT LIKE? I MEAN... THE PROGRAM?

WELL, **GUESS THE GUEST** IS A PANEL PROGRAM. MR. DRAYNOR, OUR PANEL HAS TO GUESS YOUR OCCUPATION BY KINESCOPE IT! YOU KNOW... PUT IT ON TAPE FOR A FUTURE REROADCAST! OVER OUR NETWORK.

OH, I SEE? BECAUSE I'M VERY INTERESTED BEFORE AN AUDIENCE...



OH, THERE'S NO STUDIO AUDIENCE AT A KINESCOPE TAPE, MR. DRAYNOR. JUST THE PANEL, MYSELF, THE CAMERAMAN, AND... YOU!

THEN I'LL ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION, MR. CHATFIELD. I'D LOVE TO HAVE YOUR CLEVER PANEL TRY TO GUESS MY OCCUPATION!

GOOD! JUST LET ME CHECK MY SCHEDULES! YES! FINE! WE'LL TAKE YOU NEXT THURSDAY NIGHT... AT 10:30 P.M. HERE'S THE ADDRESS, YOU'RE SURE YOU'LL COME?

OH, I'LL BE THERE, MR. CHATFIELD. I WOULDN'T MISS THIS FOR ANYTHING.



MR. DRAYNOR'S THOUGHTS RETURNED TO THE PRESENT AS MR. CHATFIELD SMILED...



"SORRY! WELL, NOW OF THE WILD SUESSES ARE CORRECT, HAIL! SO WE MAY BEGIN THE QUESTIONS, WE'LL START WITH MISS PRONICK!"

MR. DRAYNOR: DO YOU DEAL IN A PRODUCT?"

THE QUESTIONS BEGAN INNOCENTLY ENOUGH...FOO BROUGHT, MR. DRAYNOR IMPETUOUSLY EGGED THEM ON. MR. CHATFIELD SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING THE PROCEEDINGS.



"OH, YES, MISS PRONICK? A VERY FASCINATING PRODUCT. SOMETHING WE COULD HARDLY DO WITHOUT."

"I SEE!"

MR. CHATFIELD HAD TOLD MR. DRAYNOR HE COULD SO LIE OR ENGLISH HIS YES-OR-NO ANSWERS IF HE CARED TO, SO LONG AS HE DID NOT DELIBERATELY LIE. THAT WAS ALL RIGHT WITH MR. DRAYNOR.



"IS THIS A COMMON PRODUCT?"

"I'M SURE YOU'VE SEEN THIS PRODUCT, MISS PRONICK? MOST I MEAN...HAVE EVERYONE HAD, IT'S VERY COMMON!"

THEY PASSED FROM ONE TO THE OTHER, NARROWING IT DOWN, GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER. MR. DRAYNOR HAD HELPED THEM ALONG, BRINGING TO HIMSELF. HE'D WANTED THEM TO GET CLOSE...VERY CLOSE...AND MR. CHATFIELD HAD JUST SAT BACK, SMILING.



"YOU SAY THIS IS A LIQUID PRODUCT, MR. DRAYNOR. WHAT KIND OF A LIQUID?"

"WELL, IT'S A FAIRLY THICK LIQUID, MR. DUNKEL. AN IMPORTANT LIQUID! I MIGHT SAY WE COULD HARDLY GET ALONG WITHOUT THIS LIQUID...THIS VITAL FLUID."

MR. DRAYNOR SAW THE SUDDEN TWITCH OF MISS PRONICK'S LIPS NOW AS A CLUE LEADED INTO HER MIND AND HER EYES WIDENED IN HORROR. MR. DUNKEL PASSED TO HER, HER VOICE WAS HESITANT...FEARFUL.



"OH, MR. DRAYNOR, THIS...UH...SPECIAL...UH...IMPORTANT LIQUID...UH...WHAT IS...IS IT COLORED? IS IT...ER...RED?"

THEY LEANED FORWARD, HANGING ON HIS ANSWER. BREATHLESSLY, DRAMATICALLY, DRAYNOR HESITATED. DELIBERATELY, HE LOOKED TO MR. CHATFIELD, WHO SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING THE UNCOMFORTABLE TURN THE QUES HAD TAKEN. MR. DRAYNOR LICKED HIS LIPS, BEING CAREFUL TO KEEP THEM CAREFULLY CLOSED AS HE ALWAYS DID IN PUBLIC...



"YES! THE LIQUID IS A DEEP VIVID CRIMSON COLOR! THE COLOR WE ARE ALL SO FAMILIAR WITH."

"OH, HE"

THE PANEL GASPED IN UNISON, EXCHANGING STARTLED GLANCES. DRAYNOR CHUCKLED SOFTLY, WHISPERING THAT OLD CLICHE TO MR. CHATFIELD WHO SMILED HAPPILY...



"THEY SEEM SHOCKED, MR. CHATFIELD, AS THE STORY WRITERS PUT IT...THEIR FACES SEEM PALE, DRAINED OF BLOOD!"

"HEH...HEH! YOU'RE SO RIGHT!"

DESPERATELY THEY HURLED QUESTIONS AT HIM, HOPING THEY WERE WRONG AT WHAT THEY SUSPECTED...



PETERS SEEMED TO BE MENTALLY GAGGED, LEAVING THE DIRECT QUESTION LIKE SOME HORRIBLE BLIND LYING BEFORE HIM...



THE DRINKING, GLOATING GUEST CHOSE HIS WORDS CAREFULLY, FOR THEIR FULLEST AND MOST SARCASMIC MEANING. IT WAS SO DELIGHTFUL, WATCHING THE PANEL SWEAT AND GLOOM...



IT WAS DUNNELL'S TURN AGAIN, BUT HE WAS STILL AFRAID TO COME OUT WITH IT OPENLY. HE TRIED TO APPROACH IT IN A ROUNDABOUT WAY, LIKE A FEARFUL MAN SKIRTING THE EDGE OF A DEEP, DEADLY PIT...



THEY WERE ALL BEATING AROUND THE BUSH, AFRAID TO NAME THE HEEDLESS OCCUPATION TORTURING THEIR SENSES. MISS PRONICK LOOKED POSITIVELY ILL AS SHE STAMMERED...



MR. CHATFIELD'S EYES BLEAMED AS HE WARNED THE PANEL OF THE FLEETING TIME. IT WAS THE TRIUMPH HE'D PLANNED ALL ALONG. THAT'S WHY HE'D INVITED MR. GRAYSON AT RIGHT. IT ALL FIT IN SO NICELY. QUITE A LOVELY TORTMENTING TRICK...



THE PANEL SHRINK NOW AS DRAYNOR LEERED AT THEM, MOCKING THEM... DEFTING THEM... DARING THEM TO PIN HIM DOWN. MR. CHATFIELD SAT BACK, WONDERING IF THEY'D HAVE THE NERVE...



WELL, PANEL? ANY MORE QUESTIONS? DO YOU GIVE UP? YOU HAVE ONE MINUTE!

NO! WAIT! WE KNOW! WE ALL KNOW! MR. DRAYNOR IS A... A... OH, NO... IT CAN'T BE! CHATFIELD! YOU WOULDN'T DO THIS TO US!

MR. DRAYNOR GIGGLED. MR. CHATFIELD LOOKED SURPRISED...



OO HOO, MRS. PRONGE? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN!

WE'LL PROTEST, CHATFIELD! WE'LL PROTEST TO THE NET-WORK!

IT ISN'T FAIR! WE'RE SUPPOSED...

MR. CHATFIELD LAUGHED...



THIS MAN HAS A LEGITIMATE OCCUPATION? IF YOU CAN'T GUESS IT, HE WINS! NOW, DO YOU CARE TO MAKE A STAB AT IT?

NO! A DIRTY TRICK! YOU'LL HEAR ABOUT THIS!

MR. CHATFIELD TURNED TO MR. DRAYNOR...



MR. PIERCE DRAYNOR? YOU HAVE STUMPED OUR PANEL WITH YOUR OCCUPATION! 'GUESS THE GUEST' IS PROUD TO PRESENT ITS JACK-POT PRIZE...

...THIS SOLID OAK, NANO HEWN, NYLON LINED, BRASS HAILED GABRET... FOR YOU TO REST IN ETERNAL REPOSE FOREVERMORE...



GULP...

A GABRET? SAY! WHAT KIND OF A PROGRAM IS THIS?

YOU SEE, TRAIL! MR. PIERCE DRAYNOR IS... A FA...



... VAST MANUFACTURER OF RED INK!



MR. DRAYNOR LAUGHED OUT LOUD, FORGETTING TO HIDE HIS POOR TEETH DEFORMED BY PYORRHEA...

WHA-HA-HA! YES! THAT'S RIGHT! PLAIN OLD RED INK!

CHAFFIELD: WE THOUGHT YOU'D DEIGNED US...



DRAYNOR'S LAUGH CHOKED AND DIED. THE MEMBERS OF THE PANEL WERE RISING FROM THEIR SEATS... COMING TOWARD HIM.

ANTONY! HOW COULD YOU! LETTING US SUFFER THROUGH THE WHOLE AWFUL THING.

OH, I COULDN'T RESIST! WHEN I FOUND OUT WHAT HE DID, I JUST COULDN'T RESIST!



CHAFFIELD ROSE, STANDING OVER DRAYNOR. AND THE CAMERAMAN, TOO, LEFT HIS WHIRRING MECHANISM TO JOIN THE GROWLING PANEL MEMBERS AS THEY SLID TOWARD THEIR INVITED GUEST...

I AMER YOU'D THINK, FOR ONE HORRIBLE MINUTE, THAT HE WAS ONE OF US!

GOOD LORD!



THEY LOOKED OVER THE INK MANUFACTURER, HEMMING HIM IN, THEIR SHARP FANGS GLISTENING IN THE WHITE LIGHT FROM THE HOT KLEBS...



MR. DRAYNOR FLAILED AS THEY BENT OVER HIM, SINKING THEIR NEEDLE-SHARP FANGS INTO HIS FLESH...SUCKING...SUCKING... DRAWING THE SCARLET LIFE-FLUID FROM HIS WEAKING BODY. AND JUST BEFORE THE DARKNESS CLOSED IN, DRAYNOR HEARD MR. CHAFFIELD ROSE, WITH HIS BLOODY MOUTH, AND CLOSE THE 'CANNEED' SHOW...



HEY, NEW GUTE IDEA, EH, FIEORS... HAVING A PRIVATE-TV NETWORK FOR THE BRAWNY YARD GALLERY? OF COURSE, IT'S BROADCAST OVER KAM-F! THAT'S ULTRA-HORRIBLE FREQUENCIES! IN COLOR, TOO! ALL PRETTY FLESH-CRIMSON AND BLOOD-RED! AS FOR POOR MR. DRAYNOR... WELL, HE NOT TO USE THE PRICE HE'D WON! SOONER THAN HE EXPECTED, TOO! AND NOW, THE OLD WITCH WAITS WITH HER MOROSE MESS COOKING IN HER CROCKY CALL-DROU! BY THE WAY! DID YOU JOIN THE E.C. KAM-ADDICT GANG YET? LADY!!!



THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEY, HEY! AND NOW, IT'S DELIRIUM DESSERT TIME IN C.H.'S MORNING MUCK-NUG. . . AND YOUR BRUSSELER - JERIC, YOUR FESTEERING FRAPPE-FEEDER, YOUR SORDID SUNDAY-SLOPPER, THE OLD WITCH, IS READY TO DISH OUT HER LATEST COOL, CAULDRON CONCOCTION. . . A DELIGHTFULLY ENJOYABLE TALE OF EVIL EMBROIDERY AND CREEPY CROCHETING AND NAUSEATING KNITTING WHICH I CALL...

ACCIDENTS and OLD LACE

THE STILL NIGHT OUTSIDE THE BOARDING HOUSE WAS SUDDENLY SHATTERED BY THE SICKENING IMPACT OF TWO TONS OF METAL AND RUBBER AND GLASS AND FLESH MEETING A SOLID WALL OF BRICK AND CONCRETE. THE PAINFUL SCREAMS OF BRAGS PRECEDING THE CRASH STILL ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT AS THE ROOMERS FLOURED OUT ONTO THE PORCH AND DOWN THE WOODEN STEPS. ERIC HOLBEN JOINED THEM AS THEY RUSHED TO THE MESS OF TWISTED FINGERS AND PULVERIZED WISDOMS, TORN MUSCLES AND SHATTERED BONE, AND THICK BLOOD THAT OZZED FROM THE WRECK AND POOLED LIKE A SCARLET LAKE UPON THE COLD SIDEWALK.



ERIC HOLBEN STOOD BEHIND THE THREE OLD LADIES THAT SHARED THE BATH ROOM NEXT DOOR TO HIS. HE WATCHED WITH SATISFACTION AS THEIR MOUTHS DROPPED OPEN DUMBLY AND THEIR EYES GLAZED IN HORROR AND THE COLOR DRAINED FROM THEIR AGED AND WRINKLED FACES AS THEY BEHELD THE DEATH SCENE. AND ERIC HOLBEN SMILED...



HE WATCHED THEM TURN IN DREAD AND REVOLUTION AND SCURRY LIKE ROY LEAVES OVER THE BOARDING HOUSE LEARN TO THE SAFETY AND SANCTITY OF THE IMPROVING STRUCTURE THAT HAD BEEN THEIR HOME FOR THE PAST TWELVE YEARS...



AND HE KNEW THAT SOON HE WOULD HAVE ANOTHER FABULOUS TRAGEDY TO SELL TO HIS FRIEND, MILTON... A TAPESTRY WOVEN FEVERISHLY BY THREE PAIRS OF SHAKLED AND BERTHOUS HANDS GUIDED BY THREE PAIRS OF MILKY BLOODSHOT EYES THAT HAD LOOKED UPON THE HORROR OF VIOLENT ACCIDENTAL DEATH...



AS THE HASTILY SUMMONED AMBULANCE BOREAWAY UP TO THE CRASH SCENE IN ITS USELESS MERCY TRIP, ERIC HOLBERT CASHED HIMSELF INTO A SECRETLY PORCH ROOMER AND THOUGHT BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF ALL THIS... TO THAT VERY FIRST DAY HE'D COME TO THE BOARDING HOUSE...



OF COURSE, MR. HOLBERT I HAVE A VERY NICE ROOM WACANT. FIFTEEN A WEEK... WITH MEALS... I'LL TAKE IT, MRS. CARTER.

ERIC HAD BEEN AN ART DEALER BACK IN NEW YORK. HE'D HAD A SMALL GALLERY BUT IT HAD NEVER BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL. THE ARTISTS THAT HAD COME TO HIM WITH THEIR CANVASES AND SCULPTURES HAD NOT BEEN TOO GOOD. HE'D BEEN FORCED TO CLOSE THE GALLERY AFTER A WHILE. PEOPLE HAD STOPPED COMING TO BUY...



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE A NEW ADDITION TO OUR LITTLE FAMILY! THIS IS MR. ERIC HOLBERT... YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR DINNER, MR. HOLBERT?

SO ERIC HAD COME TO MARYVILLE TO BEGIN AGAIN. HE'D HAD NOTHING SPECIFIC IN MIND. HE'D JUST PACKED HIS THINGS IN NEW YORK AND TAKEN A TRAIN WEST. AND WHEN HE'D BECOME TIRED OF RIDING, HE'D STOPPED OFF. AND IT'D BEEN AT MARYVILLE...



OH, I'M SORRY! THIS IS BRUCE... AND CHARLOTTE... AND EMMA LOU SALSBERY. THEY LIVE IN THE ROOM NEXT DOOR TO YOURS... HOW DO YOU DO, LADIES?

ERIC HAD NODDED ASSENTLY TO THE THREE OLD LADIES AND POKED AT HIS FOOD. HIS THOUGHTS A MILLION MILES AWAY. WHAT COULD HE DO NOW THAT HE'D COME TO MARYVILLE? HOW LONG COULD HE LAST UNTIL HIS MONEY RAN OUT?



WHAT DO YOU DO, MR. HOLBERT? I MEAN, WHAT BUSINESS ARE YOU IN? WHY... I... I USED TO BE AN ART DEALER, MRS. CARTER!

BRUCE? CHARLOTTE? EMMA LOU? DID YOU HEAR? MR. HOLBERT IS AN ART DEALER. YOU MUST SHOW HIM YOUR TAPESTRIES!



TAPESTRIES? WHY, I... OH, MR. HOLBERT WOULD'N'T BE INTERESTED, JANET!

THE GIRLS ARE SAYING, MR. HOLDEN, THEY WERE WONDERFUL TAPESTRIES. AFTER DINNER, YOU MUST SEE THEM...

I'D BE DELIGHTED.

HE'D AGREED TO LOOK AT THE SALSBURY SISTERS' WORK MERELY AS A CONDEMNATION... TO AVOID WOUNDING THEM... AND THE ONE THEY'D SHOWN HIM HAD BEEN JUST WHAT HE'D EXPECTED.

IT'S VERY PRETTY! PURE CRAFTSMANSHIP! GOOD GOLDFER... AH.

IS IT WORTH ANYTHING, MR. HOLDEN?

BUT THEN, HE'D SPIED THE TAPESTRY THAT HAD BEEN ROLLED UP AND ALMOST HIDDEN FROM VIEW AND HE'D ABSENTLY TAKEN IT OUT OF THE CLOSET AND SPREAD IT OPEN...

I REALLY CAN'T SAY, MRS. CARTER. TAPESTRIES LIKE THAT ARE... ARE WHO MADE THIS?

GRACE? OH, DEAR!

THE SALSBURY SISTERS HAD SNATCHED THE TAPESTRY FROM ERIC AND ROLLED IT UP AGAIN, SPOILING IT.

THIS ONE'S NOT A VERY GOOD EXAMPLE OF OUR WORK!

NO GOOD AT ALL!

WE INTENDED TO DESTROY IT!

HOW?

BUT THE BRIEF VIEW HE'D HAD OF IT HAD BEEN ENOUGH. ERIC HOLDEN HAD WAITED ALL HIS LIFE FOR THAT MOMENT...

WHEN DID YOU MAKE THAT ONE? THAT ONE IS GOOD! THAT TAPESTRY IS A WORK OF ART... AN EXPRESSION OF SHEER GENIUS...

THIS...?

THIS ONE?

SHEEPSKIN. THE SISTERS HAD UNROLLED THE TAPESTRY AGAIN. ERIC'S HEART HAD RACED IN HIS CHEST. HIS EYES HAD MOVED SLOWLY OVER THE MINUTE STITCHES... THE DREAMY SOMBER COLORS, THE EMOTIONAL SWIRLING COMPOSITION, HE'D REACHED OUT, AS IN A DREAM, AND TOUCHED HIS DREAM, AND HIS DREAM HAD BEEN REAL.

THIS... IS ART? THIS... IS GOOD?

WE... WE MADE THAT WHEN MR. GOLDEN WAS KILLED! REMEMBER, GRACE?

YES, THAT'S IT? I REMEMBER.

HE WAS HIT BY A CAR...

DOWN BY THE CORNER!

WE SAW THE WHOLE THING! IT WAS ABOUT THE BLOOD! THE TWISTED BODY POON... GOLDEN! WE MADE THIS THAT VERY NIGHT!



YES, THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF IT. ERIC HAD TAKEN THE TREASURY TO NEW YORK, TO AN ART DEALER FRIEND OF HIS...JUST TO CHECK ON HIS OWN JUDGMENT.

THIS IS GOOD, ERIC! WHO DID IT? CAN YOU GET MONEY EXCEL-LENT? SUCH EXPRESSION...SUCH EMOTION!

HOW MUCH IS IT WORTH, MILTON?

I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR IT!

AND IF I CAN GET MORE FOR YOU?

I'M SURE I'LL BE ABLE TO SELL THEM TO THE PARTY I HAVE IN MIND. I'LL BUY ALL YOU CAN GET. IF THEY'RE AS GOOD AS THIS ONE, FOR FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS EACH!

IT'S A DEAL, MILTON! WRITE OUT A CHECK! AND I'LL BE BACK SOON...WITH OTHERS!

SO ERIC HAD GONE BACK AND TOLD THE SISTERS

FIFTY DOLLARS? OH, DEAR! THAT'S AN AWFUL LOT OF MONEY! AND THIS IS ALL FOR US?

I HAD TO FIGHT FOR IT, BUT HE FINALLY GAVE IN! AND HE WANTS MORE!

MORE?

BUT WE HAVE NO MORE LIKE THAT! WE MADE OTHERS BUT WE DESTROYED THEM!

OH, NO! THEN YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE THEM OVER!

WE COULDN'T! WE WOULDN'T BE INSPIRED!

INSPIRED?

WE MADE TAPESTRIES LIKE THAT ONLY AFTER THAT ONLY AFTER WE'VE BEEN A VIOLENT ACCIDENTAL DEATH!

THE ONE WE MADE AFTER FATHER DIED WAS OUR FIRST! HE WILL REMIND THE WHEELS OF A TRAIN!

AND WE MADE SIX AFTER THAT! WE GOLDEN'S WAS OUR LAST! WE DESTROYED THE OTHERS!

THEN, IF...IF I COULD HANG YOU TO THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENTAL DEATH, YOU'D BE INSPIRED, RIGHT?

IF WE SAW THIS BODY...

AND THE BLOOD!

IT HAD BEEN MADDENING! ERIC HAD HAD TO BUY A RADIO WITH A POLICE WAVELENGTH BAND, HE SAT, NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, IN HIS ROOM... LISTENING... LISTENING...

CAR 23? CAR 23? GO TO NORTH AND MAIN? SAID ACCIDENT. ONE DEAD. TWO HURT? CAR 23? CAR 23? GO TO.

CHARLOTTE? BRACE! EMMA SOON! HURRY! IT'S RIGHT NEARBY!

WHEN ONE OF THOSE PEN AND PAPER MEN HAD COME IN, HE'D RUSHED THE OLD GALS TO THE SPOT MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THEY'D ARRIVE TOO LATE.

OH, THE BODY'S COVERED UP?

WE CAN'T GET? WHAT STAND IF I UNCOVER?

BUT THERE'D BEEN THOSE FORTY-NINE TIMES WHEN THEY'D ARRIVED BEFORE THE POLICE. THE SISTERS HAD GAWPED AND GAWPED AND ERIC HAD KNOWN HE'D HAVE HIS TAPESTRY BY MORNING.

WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME! MY DUGH WAS BURNING BUT!



THREE TIMES, FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS HAD GONE INTO ERIC'S POCKET WHILE THE SISTERS HAD RECEIVED BUT ONE NURTH THEY AMOUNT...

THIRTY... FORTY... FIFTY... THERE YOU ARE!

OH, MR. HOLBEN! YOU'RE SO GOOD TO US!

IF ONLY THERE WERE MORE ACCIDENTS, WE COULD MAKE MORE TAPESTRIES!

AND THEN IT HAD SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO ERIC MORE ACCIDENTS? OF COURSE! WHY HADN'T HE THOUGHT OF THAT BEFORE? IF THERE WEREN'T ENOUGH ACCIDENTS... HE COULD CAUSE THEM? OF COURSE!...

GOING INTO MILLVILLE

SURE! HOP IN!



SO TONIGHT, HE'D WALKED A SHORT DISTANCE OUT OF TOWN AND HE'D THUMBED A RIDE AND BEEN PICKED UP, AND WHEN HIS POOR UNSUSPECTING VICTIM'D LOOKED THE OTHER WAY...

S-S-W-H-N-N-O!

HE'D DRIVEN THE CAR TO THE STREET WHERE THE BOARDING HOUSE STOOD, PLACED THE UNCONSCIOUS MAN'S FOOT ON THE ACCELERATOR, RELEASED THE OVERDRIFT BRAKE, AND HOPPED FROM THE CAR...



THE CAR HAD SPED DOWN THE STREET CRAZILY, GATHERING SPEED. THEN IT'D SPLIN OUT OF CONTROL AND FLOWED EXPLOSIVELY INTO THE BRICK WALL.

AND HE'D WAITED FOR THE SISTERS TO COME FROM THE HOUSE, TO SEE THE LACERATED FLESH, THE PROTRUDING BONE, THE GRIPPING BLOOD.



AND NOW HE SAT UPON THE PORCH RECKER WAITING, WHILE LIFELESS, A LONELY BLOOD IN THE WEEVING SISTERS' ROOM.

ERIC ENTERED THE BOARDING HOUSE AND CLIMBED THE STAIRS. MRS. CARTER AND HER OTHER ROOM-ERD HAD LONG SINCE GONE TO BED AND NOW LAY ENJOURING TROUBLED DREAMS OF WHAT THEY'D WITNESSED EARLIER. HE KNOCKED SOFTLY.

THE DOOR OPENED SLOWLY. ERNE ENTERED. HE LOOKED AROUND. THE SLEUTH TRICKED TRULY TO THE TAP-ESTRY-STRETCHER WAS BARE WHITE AND SLATE BLANK.



"MIGHT AS WELL GO UP AND SEE HOW THEY'RE DOING!"



"WHO IS IT?" "IT'S ME! ERIC! I CAME TO MURDER!"



"WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING!" "WE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING!" "SOMETHING IS WRONG!"

ERIC BREW ANGRY. HE THOUGHT OF MILTON WRITING IN NEW YORK, WITH HIS CUSTOMER'S HUNGRY FOR MORE TAPES-TRIES. HE THOUGHT OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS AND THE GOOD TIES IT WOULD BUY. AND HE SHOOKED.

ERIC SAW THE FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR CHECK FLYING AWAY ON WINDS OF TEMPERAMENT. HE SCREAMED.



"WASN'T THAT ACCIDENT GOOD ENOUGH? DIDN'T YOU SEE THE BODY AND THE BLOOD? WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? START WEAVING!" "WE'RE NOT INSPIRED!" "WE WEREN'T MOVED!"



"LOOK! I DIDN'T FIND AN AWG GOLD FOR NOTHING! I DIDN'T FLY IT TO HIS CAR WOULD SLAM AGAINST THAT WALL AND FOLD UP LIKE THAT FOR NOTHING! I DIDN'T COMMIT MURDER FOR NOTHING!" "MURDER?" "OH, DEAR! SO THAT'S IT?"

THE OLD LADIES LOOKED AT EACH OTHER IN SHOCKED BEMUDERMENT, THEY TURNED TO ERIC AMBELY.



IT'S GOT TO BE AN ACCIDENT... OR ELSE IT'S NOT ART GOOD!

YOU TRIED TO TRICK US!

MURDER ISN'T FAIR!

THEY CAME AT HIM SLOWLY, SLIDING ON AGED LEGS, FONDLING THE INSTRUMENTS OF THEIR ART, THE SCISSORS AND THE LONG SHARP NEEDLES.



IT'S GOT TO BE AN ACCIDENT... LIKE WHEN WE PUSHED MR. GOLDEN UNDER THE TRAIN...

OR LIKE WHEN WE PUSHED MR. GOLDEN IN FRONT OF THAT CAR...

ON THE OTHERS WE SO CLEVERLY MANAGED WHILE YOU WERE LISTENING TO YOUR STUPID LITTLE RADIO.

THEY STOOD OVER HIM LIKE THE THREE WITCHES IN MACBETH... OVER THEIR LIVING, WRITHING CAULDRON.

MRS. CARTER AND HER ROOMMATES TOOK IN THEIR TROUBLED SLEEPERS, BUT NEVER HEARD THE MUFFLED SCREAMS THAT CAME FROM THE BLOOMING DISTRICT... NEVER HEARD THE SHRIEPS OF THEIR SCISSORS... THE CLICKING OF THEIR NEEDLES... THEIR GIGGLES OF SATISFACTION.

AND WHEN ERIC'S FRIEND MILTON STEPPED FORWARD IN HIS GALLERY TO MEET THE THREE SINDLY-LOOKING OLD LADIES WHO DEIGNED WITH THEIR LONG ROUND JACKS, HE NEVER DREAMED OF THE HORRORS THEY WERE CAPABLE OF WEAVING...



IT CAN'T BE MURDER!

IT'S GOT TO BE A VIOLENT ACCIDENT!

LIKE WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU!



PRETTY, ENNA... EHEHEH! SH-HH! LOU! PRETTY!



NOT UNTIL THEY UNROLLED THEIR LATEST TAPESTRY OF CROCHETED VEINS AND EMBROIDERED ARTERIES AND SEWN MUSCLES AND TENDONS AND FINGER-BALLS AND HAIR AND TACKED-DOWN EYEBALLS AND EARS AND STRUNG-UP BONES AND CARTILAGE...



IT WAS A WORK OF ART, ALL RIGHT, IT WAS ERIC GOLDEN... ALL OVER!

HEE, HEE! YEP! THE THREE OLD BODES WERE NOTS, ALL RIGHT. JUST LIKE ALL ARTISTS, INCLUDING THE GATTY-BOYS AT E.C. PULL THEY MUST BE GATTY TO DRAG THIS TRASH HERE... AND TALKING ABOUT CRAZY PEOPLE, THIS WOULD BE P.K.'S MAN WHICH YOU MIGHT? HOT HEE! AND ANYBODY WHO BOTS THIS HAUSGATING HONORS... MUST BE AS BAD OFF AS THE CREDS WHO DRAG IT. WELL, I GOTTA GO NOW... I GOTTA LEAD MY IDOT EDITORS BACK TO THEIR PADDED CELLS, SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! 'BYE NOW!



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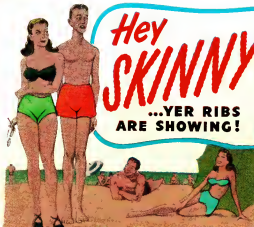
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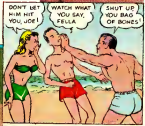
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WATCH WHAT YOU SAY, FELLA

SHUT UP YOU BAG OF BONES!



DARN IT! I'M TIRED OF BEING A SKINNY SCARECROW. CHARLES ATLAS SAYS HE CAN MAKE ME A NEW MAN! I'LL GAMBLE A STAMP AND GET HIS **FREE BOOK**.

BOY! IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG WHAT A BUILD NOW I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT BULLY.



HERE'S A LOVE-TAP— FROM THAT 'BAG OF BONES', REMEMBER?



OH, JOE! YOU ARE A REAL HE-MAN, AFTER ALL.

WHAT A MAN!

AND HE USED TO BE SO SKINNY!

I Can Make YOU a New Man, Too, In Only 15 Minutes a Day!

CHARLES ATLAS
Holder of title "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"



PEOPLE used to laugh at my skinny 90-pound body. I was ashamed to strip for sports or for a swim. Girls made fun of me behind my back. THEN I discovered my body-building system, "Dynamic Tension." It made me such a complete specimen of manhood that I hold the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

What's My Secret?

When you look in the mirror and see a healthy, husky fellow smiling back at you — then you'll be astonished at how fast "Dynamic Tension" GETS RESULTS! It is the easy, NATURAL method and you can practice in the privacy of your own room — JUST 15 MINUTES EACH DAY. Just watch your arm, chest and shoulder muscles begin to swell — those spindly arms and legs of yours bulge — and your whole body starts to feel "alive," full of zip and go!

Thousands are becoming husky — my way. I give you no gadgets to fool with. With "Dynamic Tension" you simply utilize the dormant muscle-power in your own body — watch it grow and multiply into real solid **LIVE MUSCLE**.

FREE My 32 Page Illustrated Book is Yours — Net for \$1.00 or 10c — But **FREE**

Send for my book, *Everlasting Health and Strength*. 32 pages of ph-dos, valuable advice. Shows what *Dynamic Tension* can do, answers vital questions. A real prize for any fellow who wants a better build. I'll send you a copy **FREE**. It may change your whole life. Rush coupon to the personality Charles Atlas, Dept. 444, 115 E. 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y.

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 444, 115 East 23 St., New York 10, N. Y.

Send me — absolutely **FREE** — a copy of your famous book *Everlasting Health and Strength* — 32 pages, illustrated with photographs, answers to vital questions, and valuable advice. This book is mine to keep and reading for it does not oblige me in any way.

Name _____ Age _____
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 Address _____
 City _____ State _____
 If under 14 years of age check here for Booklet A.